

C. Remarks

The claims are 1 and 3, with claim 1 being the sole independent claim. Claim 2 has been cancelled without prejudice or disclaimer and its features have been incorporated into claim 1. Claim 1 has also been amended for clarification and to further define the invention. Additional support for the amendment may be found, for example, in the substitute specification in the paragraph bridging pages 5 and 6. No new matter has been added. Reconsideration of the claims is expressly requested.

In the Advisory Action dated November 18, 2009, the Examiner indicated that claims 1-3 remain rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being allegedly obvious from U.S. Patent No. 4,825,249 (Oki) in view of U.S. Patent Nos. 3,024,209 (Ferrigno) and 3,387,071 (Cahill). The Examiner alleged that the impregnation into the inside of the urethane is not recited in the rejected claims. Furthermore, the Examiner indicated that even if the impregnation is recited, Oki inherently anticipates this impregnation because Oki teaches that the coating is applied by the same immersing or dipping method (dipping - col. 3, lines 38-43) as recited in claim 3. Also, the Examiner took a position that the application contains inadequate disclosure in that there is no teaching as to how to obtain the claimed impregnation and effects by carrying out only the recited steps. Applicants respectfully disagree for the following reasons and submit that claims 1 and 3 meet the statutory requirements for patentability.

With respect to the issue of impregnation, while Applicants believe that claim 1 already explicitly recited that the urethane blade is impregnated with the isocyanate, the impregnation into the urethane is now expressed with even more specificity.

The impregnation process in accordance with the present invention, which may be performed by dipping, is different from the dipping process disclosed in Oki. For example, as mentioned in the instant specification, a urethane blade may be dipped into an isocyanate bath, which is at a temperature at which the isocyanate is in a liquid state (substitute specification, page 18, lines 11-15, and page 19, lines 1-7). In addition, the present application indicates that the urethane may be fibrous or porous, which would further facilitate impregnation (substitute specification, page 18, lines 15-17).

In Oki, the blade is dipped into an organic solution in which the isocyanate is dissolved or dispersed:

In order to form a coating of perfluoropolyether with or without isocyanate compound or hydroxyl compound, they may be dissolved or dispersed in an organic solvent e.g. a ketone such as acetone and methylethylketone, an ester such as ethyl acetate and methyl acetate, an ether such as diethylether and dioxane, a halogenated hydrocarbon such as methyl chloroform, trichloroethylene, 1,1,2-trichloro-1,2,2-trifluoroethane (fleon [*sic*] R113), or the mixture of two or more of them, and be adjusted to a suitable viscosity.

The resulting solution may be applied to the substrate surface in a conventional way such as by dipping, spraying or brushing. But the dip coating is the most economical and most preferable way because with this method the solution can be applied with the least waste of solution. (col. 3, lines 28-43)

Applicants respectfully submit that this type of application is clearly different from the dipping process described in the present application and does not lead to the claimed impregnation. In fact, Oki specifically refers to this process as coating.

Therefore, Oki does not teach using the claimed ingredients, process steps, and process conditions. Also, it is clear that the subject application contains adequate

disclosure in that there is sufficient teaching of how to obtain the claimed impregnation and effects by carrying out only the claimed steps.

One of the important characteristics of a cleaning blade is an ability to effectively remove toner. The presently claimed invention provides a cleaning blade with a contact portion that has surface roughness R_z (JIS B0601) of 5 μm or less, which makes it possible for the blade to effectively remove toner by not allowing the toner to pass through the blade. This level of surface roughness is achieved due to the performance of the claimed process steps. Neither cited references discloses or suggests this surface roughness or the claimed process steps, which are important for attaining it.

In conclusion, Applicants respectfully submit that whether considered separately or in any combination, the documents of record fail to disclose or suggest the presently claimed elements. Wherefore, withdrawal of the outstanding rejection and passage of the application to issue are respectfully requested.

Applicants' undersigned attorney may be reached in our New York office by telephone at (212) 218-2100. All correspondence should continue to be directed to our below listed address.

Respectfully submitted,

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